

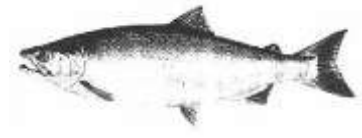
ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES



NEWS RELEASE

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Date Issued: Saturday, June 29, 2013
Time: 12:30 pm

Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #27

GILLNET FISHERIES: Deep gear will be permitted in the Coghill, Eshamy, Montague, and Unakwik districts starting on Monday, July 1.

COPPER RIVER DISTRICT: The Copper River District will open at 7:00 am on Monday, July 1 for a 36-hour commercial fishing period. Waters within the Chinook salmon inside closure area will be OPEN during this fishing period. The cumulative sonar count through June 21 was 893,424 fish whereas the anticipated inriver passage range for this date is 502,266–771,337 fish. The count from midnight through 6:00 am this morning was 4,102 fish, which projects to a daily count of 16,408 fish. The minimum inriver passage objective for today is 8,237 fish. For the week ending June 29, the actual Copper River delta survey index count was 39,660 versus an anticipated range of 17,627–41,665 sockeye salmon. An aerial survey of the Copper River Delta is anticipated to be flown next week. The hatchery contributions from the period that closed on June 21 were 1% Main Bay and 32% Gulkana Hatchery. Preliminary harvest is not yet available for the fishing period that closed this morning. The cumulative Copper River District commercial harvest to date is 8,200 Chinook salmon and 1.14 million sockeye salmon.

The Copper River District is open to subsistence fishing concurrent with commercial fishing periods until closed at the end of the season. Subsistence permits may be obtained during regular business hours. The Cordova ADF&G office is open to the public Monday - Friday, 8:00 am - 12:00 pm and 1:00 pm - 5:00 pm. **Subsistence permits are not available outside of regular office hours.**

BERING RIVER DISTRICT: The Bering River District will open at 7:00 am on Monday, July 1 for a 36-hour commercial period. For the week ending June 29, the actual Bering River District survey index count was 17,100 versus a minimum anticipated range of 6,092–13,402 sockeye salmon. The next aerial survey of the Bering River District is anticipated to be flown next week. No harvest was reported for the commercial fishing period that closed Tuesday, June 25.

MONTAGUE DISTRICT: The Port Chalmers Subdistrict will open to drift gillnet fishing for a 60-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Monday, July 1 with an additional 84-hour period anticipated to begin at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 4. This schedule is anticipated to remain in effect until further notice. The western boundary of the Port Chalmers Subdistrict is defined by lines from 60°20.00'N., 147°26.59'W. to 60°14.75'N., 147°35.35'W. to 60°02.50'N., 147°44.41'W. Regulatory closed waters and anadromous stream closures within the Port Chalmers Subdistrict will not be in effect until further notice. Harvest from the period that closed Wednesday, June 26 was 25,000 chum salmon with 94 deliveries reported.

COGHILL DISTRICT: The Coghill District, excluding the Bettles Bay and Esther subdistricts, will open to commercial drift gillnet harvest for a 48-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Monday, July 1. The Esther Subdistrict, excluding the WNH SHA and THA, will open to commercial fishing for a 24-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Monday, July 1. Harvest from the period that closed Wednesday, June 26 was 176,000 chum and 13,000 sockeye salmon with 660 deliveries reported. Cumulative harvest through this date was 1.16 million chum and 31,000 sockeye salmon. As of June 29, PWSAC estimated 215,000–255,000 chum salmon in the WNH SHA. PWSAC's chum salmon broodstock goal is 216,000 fish. The Coghill weir was fish tight on June 17. The cumulative passage at the weir through June 28 is 2,364 sockeye salmon versus an anticipated count of 3,029 fish. A total of 156,000 sockeye salmon are forecast to return to Coghill Lake, with 126,000 fish anticipated to be available for common property harvest. The harvest timing for these sockeye salmon is from June 1 – August 1.

ESHAMY DISTRICT: The Eshamy District will open to commercial gillnet harvest for a 48-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Monday, July 1. **The MBH AGZ will be closed during this fishing period.** Harvest from the period that closed Wednesday, June 26 was 22,000 chum and 117,000 sockeye salmon with 785 deliveries reported. Cumulative harvest

through this date was 122,000 chum and 241,000 sockeye salmon. A total of 1.13 million sockeye salmon are forecast to return to MBH. The harvest timing for these sockeye salmon is from June 1 – August 1.

UNAKWIK DISTRICT: The Unakwik District will open to commercial drift gillnet and purse seine harvest for a 24-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Monday, July 1. No harvest was reported for the fishing period that closed Thursday, June 27.

SEINE FISHERIES: VFDA began its pink salmon cost recovery fishing program on Thursday, June 20. VFDA has collected approximately 39% of the assigned pink salmon revenue goal through June 28. Overall cost recovery pink salmon harvest in Port Valdez on Friday, June 28 was approximately 207,000 fish with an average weight of approximately 2.9 pounds per fish and 20% female. Samples from cost recovery harvest conducted at Entrance Point on June 28 provide an estimate of 24% female.

EASTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Eastern District will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 14-hour period starting at 6:00 am on Sunday, June 30. Waters of Port Valdez east of 146° 30.62' W. longitude will be closed to commercial fishing during this period at VFDA's request. Anadromous stream closures south of a line from Potato Point to Entrance Point will be in effect. Anadromous stream closures and regulatory closed waters north of a line from Potato Point to Entrance Point will not be in effect. **Waters inside of all Eastern District Salmon Harvest Task Force (SHTF) markers will be closed to commercial fishing during this period to ensure early season escapement.** It is anticipated that cost recovery fishing will resume on July 1, with a second potential commercial opening occurring on Wednesday, July 3. An announcement is anticipated for Monday, July 1 with updates on harvest, effort, and VFDA cost recovery fishing progress. The Eastern District harvest estimate from the 12-hour period on Thursday, June 27 is 28 Chinook, 1,000 sockeye, 15 coho, 387,000 pink and 3,980 chum salmon with 64 deliveries reported. **Waters inside of Eastern District SHTF markers closed to commercial fishing during this period include:**

- (1) Sheep Bay: north of a line from a shore marker at approximately 60°41.13' N. lat., 145°58.87' W. long. to a shore marker at approximately 60°40.46' N. lat., 145°58.01' W. long.;
- (2) Beartrap Bay: north of a line from a shore marker at approximately 60°45.13' N. lat., 146°06.12' W. long. to a shore marker at approximately 60°44.51' N. lat., 146°04.57' W. long.;
- (3) Olsen Bay: north of a line from a shore marker at approximately 60°43.46' N. lat., 146°10.14' W. long. to a shore marker at approximately 60°43.21' N. lat., 146°13.97' W. long.;
- (4) St. Matthews Bay: north of a line from a shore marker at approximately 60°43.36' N. lat., 146°19.07' W. long. to a shore marker at approximately 60°43.61' N. lat., 146°21.17' W. long.;
- (5) Irish Cove: south of a line from a shore marker at approximately 60°46.73' N. lat., 146°26.62' W. long. to a shore marker at approximately 60°46.27' N. lat., 146°27.12' W. long.;
- (6) Landlocked Bay: waters north of 60°50.76' N. lat.;
- (7) Port Fidalgo Subdistrict: waters east of 146°24.12' W. long.;
- (8) Galena Bay: east of a line from a shore marker at approximately 60°56.87' N. lat., 146°39.87' W. long. to a shore marker at approximately 60°56.55' N. lat., 146°39.65' W. long.;
- (9) Jack Bay: south and east of a line from a shore marker at approximately 61°02.34' N. lat., 146°35.27' W. long. to a shore marker at approximately 61°02.17' N. lat., 146°39.77' W. long.;
- (10) Sawmill Bay: north of a line from a shore marker at approximately 61°02.71' N. lat., 146°46.44' W. long. to a shore marker at approximately 61°02.58' N. lat., 146°47.07' W. long.

SHTF marker coordinates are available in the Cordova ADF&G office, and have been provided to area processors, VFDA and PWSAC for distribution to fishery participants.

Please refer to Prince William Sound News Release #26 from Thursday, June 27 for details regarding Prince William Sound anadromous stream closures. This announcement and its associated Emergency Order closed waters in the vicinity of select stream and river mouths to provide protection of salmon escapement. Under the authority of 5 AAC 39.290 Closed Waters (c), a list of Latitude/Longitude points is being implemented around which waters within a 500-yard radius are closed to commercial fishing. Unless specified in a news release, closed areas defined by existing markers remain in effect. Electronic copies of the list and associated map detailing these updated regulatory closed waters are available at the following web address under the Prince William Sound Anadromous Waters Closures heading:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareapws.salmon#/maps>

Copies of the list and map are also available in the Cordova ADF&G office.

Please refer to the ADF&G 2012-2015 Commercial Salmon Fishing Regulations for Prince William Sound booklet for regulations regarding commercial salmon fisheries in the Prince William Sound Area. This booklet is available in the Cordova ADF&G office and at the following web address:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/regulations/fishregulations/pdfs/commercial/PWSSalmon-2012-2015.pdf>

SOUTHEASTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Southeastern District will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 14-hour period starting at 6:00 am on Sunday, June 30. The Southeastern District harvest estimate from the 12-hour period on Thursday, June 24 is 7 Chinook, 2,110 sockeye, 64 coho, 96,500 pink and 1,470 chum salmon with 18 deliveries reported.

SOUTHWESTERN DISTRICT: On the east side of Knight Island, the waters of Marsha Bay, west of 147° 39.75' W. long., opened to purse seine fishing at 8:00 am on Thursday, June 27 for 84 hours, with an additional 60-hour period beginning at 8:00 am on Monday, July 1. This schedule is anticipated to remain in effect until further notice. Anadromous stream closures within Marsha Bay will not be in effect until further notice. These openings are intended to target a forecast return of 6,400 remote release sockeye salmon. These sockeye salmon have an average run timing of June 15 – August 1.

The AFK Hatchery THA and SHA opened to purse seine fishing at 8:00 am on Thursday, June 27 for 84 hours, with an additional 60-hour period beginning at 8:00 am on Monday, July 1. This schedule is anticipated to remain in effect until further notice. Anadromous stream closures within the AFK Hatchery THA and SHA will not be in effect until further notice. The harvest estimate from the 60-hour period that ended on Wednesday, June 26 is unavailable at this time. A total of 306,000 remote release chum salmon are forecast to return to the AFK Hatchery. The run timing for these chum salmon is from June 1 – July 27.

The next scheduled salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to occur by 2:00 pm Monday, July 1.

Permit holders are advised that unscheduled announcements based on current escapement data may occur at any time inseason either establishing an additional period or extending an open period.

Announcement recordings are available for **gillnet fisheries at 907-424-7535 and seine fisheries at 907-424-7345. In addition, announcement recordings are available in Anchorage at 267-2843.**

Additionally, announcements, inseason harvest data, and escapement data are available at the following web addresses:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperriver.main> (Copper River homepage) or

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareapws.main> (Prince William Sound homepage).

Unless otherwise specified, all openings are clock openings based on Alaska Daylight Time, which is based on Coordinated Universal Time and may be obtained by calling 303-499-7111.

The department encourages commercial permit holders to renew their licenses early and to check their CFEC vessel registration stickers to make sure that they are current.

The department also encourages permit holders to report observed violations to Wildlife Safeguard at 800-478-3377. Reports are anonymous and cash rewards may be paid for successful prosecution of violations.

PWS commercial fishers are reminded that area fisheries often necessitate fishing in close proximity to marine mammals. Under the Marine Mammals Protection Act (MMPA), the PWS drift gillnet fishery is classified as a Category II fishery. Participants in Category I and II fisheries must be registered in the Marine Mammal Avoidance Program (MMAP) to be authorized for lawful incidental, but not intentional, marine mammal takes during fishing. However, this authorization explicitly does **not** exempt holders of commercial fishing permits from the MMPA prohibition on takes of marine mammals listed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act. As a participant in the PWS drift gillnet fishery you are automatically registered in the Marine Mammal Authorization Program (MMAP) by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). As a participant in a Category II fishery, you must:

- Maintain an MMAP Authorization Certificate, or a photocopy, on board the vessel while engaging in any of the fisheries identified on the reverse side of the certificate. For non-vessel or set net fisheries, the enclosed Certificate, or a photocopy, must be in the possession of the permit holder during fishing operations. This Certificate, in combination with a current, valid state or Federal fishing permit, will serve as your authorization to incidentally take non-endangered or non-threatened marine mammals in the course of commercial fishing operations.
- Report all injuries and mortalities of marine mammals within 48 hours of returning from the trip during which these takes occurred using the MMAP Mortality/Injury Reporting Form (visit http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/interactions/mmap_reporting_form.pdf for a copy).
- If so requested, take an observer aboard your vessel.

Purse seine and set gillnet gear are classified as a category III fisheries under the MMPA. Category III fishery participants are automatically exempted from the incidental take prohibition in the MMPA. Therefore, you do not need to maintain the MMAP certificate aboard your vessel, but must report any

incidental takes of marine mammals within 48 hours of the incident or your return to port. Such reports must be made on the Marine Mammals Authorization Program Mortality/Injury Reporting Form.

Because some marine mammals are also listed under the Endangered Species Act, incidental takes are also regulated under that act and are not authorized. **All** MMPA category fisheries are liable for incidentally taking ESA listed species.

Please reference http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/esa_factsheet.pdf for a list of marine mammals currently listed under the ESA (you should periodically check with the National Marine Fisheries Service for any changes in listed species). Under the ESA, take means to “harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct.” 16U.S.C. 1532(19); and harass means an “intentional or negligent act or omission which creates the likelihood of injury to the wildlife by annoying it to such an extent as to significantly disrupt normal behavioral patterns which include, but are not limited to, breeding, feeding, or sheltering.” (50 C.F.R. 17.3).

To reduce the possibility of incidentally taking an ESA listed species and its associated liability ADF&G recommends that:

- Fishermen participating in area fisheries remain vigilant in monitoring gear when marine mammals may be present.
- Fishermen use avoidance measures (e.g., not fishing or relocating fishing activities when marine mammals are present or likely to be present) to minimize interactions with marine mammals.
- Avoid fishing in areas where marine mammals are likely to be present at night or when visibility or weather conditions make it difficult to spot marine mammals.

For further questions concerning marine mammal regulations call NMFS at 907-271-5006.